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My name is Richard Ray. I would like to provide some information about my professional background experiences and my involvement as a member of several local, state and national organizations. I would also like to share a couple of examples of the real life challenges that I have personally experienced when faced with emergencies and was unable to text to 9-1-1 using my cellular telephone.

My employment as an ADA Compliance Coordinator for the City of Los Angeles Department on Disability, I am responsible for coordinating and monitoring department compliance with disability civil rights laws and regulations, which include assisting City departments with effective implementation of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. I also provide technical assistance to City departments and facilitate access for individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard-of-hearing and individuals who have speech disabilities to city-wide programs, activities, and services.

I am a Chair of the National Emergency Number Association - Accessibility Committee and a co-Chair of the Federal Communications Commission -Emergency Access Advisory Committee (EAAC). I am also a member of National Advisory Board of Preparedness & Emergency Response Research Center (PERRC), University of Berkeley and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP) - Equipment Program Advisory Committee.

In past, I have served as a President of California Association of the Deaf (CAD) and have participated as a member of Public Utilities Commission's Deaf and Disabled Telecommunication Program Administrative Committee & TDD Placement Interim Committee; The National Association for the Deaf's 9-1-1/Emergency Warning System Standard Committee; and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE).

I'd like to share an incident that happened to me transpired last October 2, 2011 that needs immediate attention.

I was unable to call 9-1-1 for help on my handheld wireless device because I am deaf. Text messaging system is not available for 9-1-1 calls. I was driving on errands when I was experiencing sharp chest pain and numbness in my arm. I had difficult time breathing. Fortunately, a deaf friend who was with me drove me to the hospital immediately where I stayed over-night for observation.

I want to reiterate this point that there is much needed service for individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability to be able to call 9-1-1 directly via multi-media technologies they

use. I am requesting that immediate solution(s) to provide communications access to 9-1-1 through the use of this simple, easy-to-remember three digit dialing code, be addressed and resolved.

For people like me, this could be a matter of life and death.

As you know, technologies are growing and changing rapidly. Individuals with disabilities are using handheld wireless devices as their primary mode of communication. They use SMS, e-mail and instant messaging rather than relying on Teletypewriter/ Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TTY/TDD). This technology opens door to a new world and new opportunities to merge into society.

I am asking you to please take into consideration in ensuring that the transition process of Next Generation (NG) 9-1-1, which will accept direct calls via any means of technology, which include text message, instant messaging, email, video, TTY, videophone, and much more should be processed as quickly as possible. Most importantly, it is crucial that public safety and the carriers move forward immediately with SMS text to 911 as an interim solution. We all want a better and more reliable solution to save lives of people who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing and individuals with speech disabilities who rightfully so deserves it.

Also, a situation occurred when there was an outage in data network on October 12, 2011, I was not able to utilize email or instant messaging to communicate with my co-worker. Instead, I had to utilize SMS.

Lastly, I'd like to share another incident which I experienced several years ago. At the traffic light, I was behind a vehicle when I realized that the vehicle did not move when the light turned green. I stepped out of my vehicle to investigate and found a driver who was locked in, with his head on the steering wheel. I tapped the window to get his attention. He did not respond and then I jerked the car with hope that I would get his attention. Still, there was no response. I feared that he may have died behind the wheel. I could not call 9-1-1 emergency service for help because I am deaf. There were no other people around to ask for help. There was no other system that would allow me to connect to 9-1-1 service. As much I wanted to be a "Good Samaritan", the thought of not being able to help the driver, concerned me greatly. I never found out what happened to that man.

Stories just like mine are happening everyday to people who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing, and individuals with speech disabilities. I strongly urge the FCC to initiate rules that will help to accelerate the ability for people like me to text to 9-1-1 when I experience an emergency.

Thank you for your consideration.

Richard Ray